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CAMP-NOTES.

TWO SNAKE-STORIES.

ONCE on a time, in wandering round the earth, I found myself at San Juan del Norte, on the Mosquito Shore. As usual, that little town was suffering from panic, the condition almost perennial there. Every American traveller was pestered for news of Transit projects: 'Was the Company broken? How much longer could the steamers run? and what did surveyors say?' For San Juan lives and has its being in the C. A. T. (Californian Accessory Transit) Company, and that enterprise somewhat speculative.

This particular panic, however, was so serious, that not a few officials of the lower class obtained a furlough to 'prospect' the country, in hopes of finding some rich digging, which might enable them to return with glory and dollars to the States. It is not my intention, at this moment, to enlarge on the auriferous qualities of the Mosquito Shore, but to tell two camp-stories, one of which I know to be true in the main facts, and the other there is no reason to doubt. In so doing, I should wish to preserve the phraseology and manner of the narrators, so far as propriety will permit, but I despair of rendering their quaint spirit and reckless humour without a sin against decorum. Let the reader understand, therefore, that my version, rough and grotesque as it may seem to him, is but a very faint reflection of the humour, and extravagance which so amused and interested me by many a camp-fire on the Mosquito Shore.

I was only too glad to join myself to a party, in hopes of seeing a country almost unknown. My companions were three in number: a gigantic Missourian, Secesh to his 'soft skin,' named Beasley; a quaint Yankee of Dutch family, named Vansten; and a storekeeper of Greytown, English by birth, but extravagantly Yankeeised, named Frazer. We ran up the coast in canoes as far as the Rio Indio, which my companions were anxious to 'prospect;' and on the third day up, just as the camp was chosen, Frazer killed

a python, such a monster as the Mosquito Coast has a just renown for.

'That's nigh the biggest insect ever I see!' said Beasley standing over the body. 'It must be olfired dark about his middle inside; wants a window there, I should guess.'

'Do you say so?' drawled Vansten, spitting on the carcass. 'Why, they tell us that out Massoorah-way the snakes air so big, their head and tail sometimes "fail to connect" at meal-time.'

This Transit joke raised a laugh; but before the Missourian could reply, Frazer called on us all to heave at the rope hitched round the monster's neck.

The snake was skinned, doubled over, and stretched in the smoke of our fire, whence the big jaws gaped down at us as we sat round after supper. Some one observed that 'a man's hand would come off pretty easy in them nippers.'

'Guess it would!' said Frazer—'guess it would so! But I've seen snakes from China westwards towards eternity—whipsnakes, rattlesnakes, rock-snakes, corals, ulars, sangres, an' all other devils; I've seen pythons an' boas in tens an' hundreds, but one snake I never yet see, an' that's the one as would go aside to hurt a human cretur'. I don't say other folks haven't sot eyes on him, but I never did, an' my travel's been very free!'

'You're in the right ranche, sir!' said Beasley.

'Why, down West,' sneered Vansten, 'a sucking babe ain't afeard o' the great sea-sarpint, so long as the old flag's flying overhead. Ain't that so, Beasley?'

'That's so! The babe's not afraid of any Yankee gas nor lie; an' more'n that, he's gay sure no living cretur' would go willingly under that flag. The babe's a sight safer than a downeast Yankee cuss on the Mosquito Shore.'

'Now, then, boys! If you want to shoot, shoot! an' get it over; an' if you don't want to shoot, drink! an' get it down. That's real Western talk, isn't it? Well sucked, both. Now, Mr B— here wants to know whether any of us, as was born in the woods, an' suckled on tree-juice, ever knew a python to attack a man.'

'I'm curious about it,' I said, 'because I am nearly convinced that constrictor-snakes, however big, are quite harmless. In all my travels, I never met with an instance to the contrary, nor have I ever heard one told with fair *jungle* authority.'

'Wal, boys,' began the big Missourian, 'as Double Dutch won't fight, an' as I've drunk with him, an' called him a poor cuss right an' fair, I'll tell you a right-down scare one of these snakes—worms, we call 'em—gave me down by Leon. It was just at the end of the rains, two years ago. I was riding from Granada to Realejo, on Transit business. An old Greaser* was in company with me, an ollifred sort, who never ate anything, nor drank a drop, nor slept any way comfortable. It's a sort as'll be spunged off this side shortly. A man who don't drink fair an' in reason, likewise sleep, will never think in reason, nor act fair and manly. That is, not in a general way, I take it; though there's exceptions to all things except a six-inch bowie.

'Wall, within a league or two of San Jorgé, the bush thickens up, an' at that time of year it was high-piled, you may swear. Such as it was, the track was clear enough, but the mud of the rains had crackled it up like ice on the St Lawrence in a thaw. There were welts and rifts in it as would break a man's leg if he sot step in them; an' the naked tree-trunks stood up all along, plastered an' hanging with dry mud. Man don't improve most things in this country—any way, a Greaser don't. Eh! To look along that crackled mud-track, an' then to throw an eye over the leaves an' flowers of the bush, made a man a'most doubt whether this creation was meant just for him to play his games in.

'We'd travelled a mile or two before dawn, an' the sun was but just up, when I heard a wildish sort of cry in the bush. I stopped, of course, to see what might be going; but your Greaser, he said 't were only a calf crying, an' we'd best get on. I said: "That ain't no calf, yer fool! Get on with yer, if yer like, an' save yer durned yeller skin!" So he bowed as perlite as might be, an' went off. I hitched my halter to a prickly espadillo standing there, an' took the bush with my machete an' six-shooter. One or two more cries came ringing out, ringing through me like the voice of no beast ever I see', but they died away choked like. I got on as fast as thorns would let, an' after a while I heard a rustling an' a crunching as wasn't pleasant sounds in a rooral solitude. Presently I got through to a little tiny clearing, an' in the middle of that was a sight as would a made yer grandmother talk indelicate, if took suddintly.

'It was a pretty little clearing as ever I see. There was a lot o' mountain palms, as they call 'em, growing round the edges. I never see such on mountains, but that's nothing, I s'pose. Guess it's the prettiest stick that springs, that mountain palm. Underneath, on the ground, an' climbing the tree-trunks, was a tangle of blue convolvulus, a big sight more gorgeous than yer best floor-carpet. There were trailing vines there, speckled over with crimson flowers; an' there were purple lilies, an' big soft ferns, an' red-leaved pinnelas. Thunder! what an almighty soil that is by Leon! We're bound to have it, sir! There are hundreds of men

as good as William Walker now hanging round San Francisco an' New Orleans. Let them raise the flag agin, let 'em call on us Western men agin, an' we'll ask no help to take this land, an' make an Eden of it, as it were once. Ay, sir! In spite of all, in spite of Europe an' Yankeedom, we'll raise here such a monument to William Walker as shall overshadow the highest throne on 'arth. Western men 'll do it! The East may turn up the yeller of its eyes, an' gas of human right, but the West goes forth in name of right divine. Walker was no fillibuster; he was an Avenger an' a Recreator in this land!

'Well, never mind Walker,' I laughed; 'get on with the story.'

'Naow don't you be so onkind to him. It was a downright fine bust up that! Reminds me mostly of my late grandmother's style on Independence Day. Get along for Pike County, an' never you sweat for British ignorance.'

'Ah, guess every one likes big-talk now an' again. You see, sir,' Beasley said to me, 'I knew Walker well, an' I loved him. I volunteered on the Sonora raid; an' I was first on the list for Nicaragua; ay, an' I was at Trujillo when they shot him. I saw the last of the old lion. I don't care to talk of that business before an Englishman, but if ever so mean an act, so cowardly, so—All right, Frazer; I'm back on the trail.'

'In the middle of the glade was a snake full twenty-five feet long, coiled round the body of a calf. His tail was twisted about a small palm-stem, which shook an' creaked with every spasm of the strain. I could see the muscles lengthen like ropes, an' twist up agin short as lightning, crushing the flesh wrapped in their rings. He had three coils about the body, two side by side, an' one above them. His head was pecking, as I might say, at the poor thing's neck, an' every nip drew forth a jet of blood. The calf was dead, I think, but his hanging tongue quivered with each twisting of the coils, an' his ribs crackled up so as I could hear them where I stood. Thunder! that was a grand pictur'; I never saw a grander. I stood quiet for some minutes, watching, until the snake gave a last gripe, an' then lay still, sleeking his bloody throat among the flowers, like a swan on a pond-bank.

'Just then, a notion came into my head to kill the varmin, for he was the biggest I ever see, an' his skin would be worth a good "pinch" at the Sological places in New York. I weren't such an eternal fool as to take shots at the cretur', for I knew a blow o' that long tail would bust in a man's brain-box like cracking hickories; so I put about in my mind how it should be done. Just then, I caught a sight of the loose end, wagging and waving like a kitten's when it sees a ball of twist; an' I thought: Suppose you, Jem Beasley, was to amputate that 'ere loose end. Thunder! I did it slick. A slice of my machete amputated two foot six as clean as a minister's daughter at visitation!

'Wall! an' then, ye know, I sloped eternal quick; but the snake were quicker, I tell you! The rattle an' crashing behind me was loud enough to scare a marble staatoo; an' before I'd got three yards through the bush, I knew it were on my trail. Great Heaven, how I swot! I tore along through the thorns an' pinnelas, leaving flesh on every bush; but it weren't no use, an' I knew that well. The durned worm glided after me sure as Death, making two yards to my one. I swear to you, boys, I

* 'Greaser,' a word frequently used *infra*, is applied by Americans and foreigners to the Creole population, which returns the compliment with *macho*, or he-mule.

heard it snorting an' roaring like a wounded grisly, an' its stinking breath burned through my back. I knew 't were no use running, an' in a few seconds the scare passed off—'t were downright bad at first—an' I turned to front the varmin'. But when I saw 't not three feet from me, I turned to run agin, an' I'm ashamed to own it to no man. Its throat was bent up in an under-curve to the level of my waist, an' the great white mouth was all agape, an' clotted with thick blood. Behind it was a whirl of leaves an' dust an' broken branches, an' in the midst shone two big eyes, mad with spite, glaring into mine. Such eyes—such eyes! They seemed to burn an' stare with a fire from inside, an' the clear cover over them looked white an' filmy like horn. I mind me thinking: If they would but blink, those awful eyes; if they would but glance aside, only for a pulse-beat, I would be all myself agin. But they glared an' blazed out of the dust with such fiendish spite that I felt like a squirrel charmed by the rattler.—At St Louis once, I see a madman chained, who had just that look, an' for an instant the face of that madman seemed—Ah! An' then I don't recollect much more. There was a crash an' a wild rush—a reeking stench filled my nostrils—a pressure like death wrapped in my throat an' chest—I felt blow after blow upon my head—then, I suppose, I swooned with suffocation an' loss of blood.

'It was that old Greaser saved me. He guessed something was wrong, an' came back to see. A good old fellow he were, but so durned perlite! The snake gave him a likely blow with its tail before it let me go; but he cut right an' left with his machete, an' the cretur' slunk off at last. I had three ribs broken, my face an' scalp bitten to ribbons, as you see, an' my left arm fractured in two places. The loss of his tail to "bear" on saved me; but 't were a durned close thing that time, boys; an' I don't know as ever I felt more kindly to any man than I did to that old Greaser. Though he were perlite—he were!

'But I'd near forgotten the pint of the nairrative; that snake went back an' ate his calf—by the Eternal, he did, boys!

'Naow, that's a pretty likely story,' sneered Vansten. 'Is anybody agoin' in against Pike County? If so, let him look up his dictionary words, an' cast a mental glance over the *Police Gazette*. There's superior adventure an' right-down first-class fiction in the Accident column.'

'Beasley's story is true enough,' Frazer flashed out, 'an' you know that well, Double Dutch! Tell yer what it is, hombre, if your interior is not fixed with a new an' superior windhole before we sight Greytown agin, I shall be ghastly surprised. Colonel Bowie is king on the Rio Indio, mind yer. Naow, I'll tell yer a story myself, Mister B—, as ain't quite so scarin' as Pike County's, but were pretty rising to the system.

'It was out Eastaway. We'd run over from Singapore to Sarawack, which oilfired desolation Sir James Brooke, Bart., has changed from a free an' enlightened republic into a bigoted monarchy. Now, sir, I ain't going to argoo with you or any man, so don't do it. The change may ha' been for the good o' that well-wooded country or it may not; it's a fact, an' that's enough for me. When I get hold of a downright live fact, I claw on to it tight, for such ain't common.'

'I was only going to ask whether Rajah Brooke's kingdom is called Sara-wack by the natives?'

'No, sir. The down-trodden heathen call it Sarawah; but that's nothing.

'We were loading ship-timber in the creek of Maritabás, which might prove a good location for mosquito-culture, but ha'n't no other resources, so far as I know. The Company were so oilfired slow in sending down lumber, that we prospected the country freely in waiting for it. Among other travels, I got to the Sántubong mouth of the Sarawack River, an' passed a day or two there shooting wild pigs, which air deev'lish frequent about that coast. We were wandering one day along the foot o' the mountain, me an' Harding the mate, an' a kind o' mad squatter I found there, who was growing a big thing in cocoa-nuts an' conspquent dung-beetles. One of our boatmen was with us too, a good sort, named S'Ali, one of them wild Sulumen who live on general plunder, an' thrive in face o' the Ten Commandments.

'We were travelling through "Campong" jungle, as they call it there—old clear wood, where there ain't much game, nor ought else but tree-trunks. They're powerful pretty, as you say, Beasley, these woods of Mosquito and San Juan; they're right down gay an' happy-looking with their flowers an' painted birds, an' butterflies an' living cretur's. But there's a something about them eastern forests which we can't hoe agin nohow. The trees there are bigger in girt, an' taller; an' their great branches so shut out the sun, that 'twixt time an' eternity nought has ever lived beneath 'em. Hundreds of yards round, you may throw yer eye down long dim avenoos of tree-trunks, an' not a leaf nor a green thing in sight, unless, maybe, a ruff of fern, or a long trailing orchid, or a pile of monkey-cups growing side by side like tea-cups on a tray. A man might go mad easy in them "Campongs," I should guess! It's right down lonely to go through them by yourself; an' the Lord have care and mercy on yer if yer lose the trail! No cretur' lives in them, neither bird, nor beast, nor reptile. There is never a sound to be heard. The party goes silently along, Indian fashion, like as a dim procession of ghosts winding among the trees. Just the crackling of a stick in the oozy black soil underfoot makes one start out. It's a right-down solemn thing, I tell yer, boys, is a Campong forest of the Straits.

'Wal, sir! that day we were cruising round without any thought of game, which is only to be got near sundown or at night. A little bowie an' a jack-knife was all the weepens we had with us. The squatter was heading to the Company's lumber-mills, which had just been fixed up in this likely location. We were through the little corner of Campong to be traversed, an' was skirting a line of new jungle where the undergrowth shot up like as a wall of green, an' where every inch of roadway must be cut before you.

'The squatter was a lazy sort, except at drinking an' beetle-picking, an' he walked along the line of brush looking out for a soft place. Suddenly, I pulled him up short by pointing out the queerest bit o' log-timber ever you see. It was a regular half-circle curving outwards into the Campong, both ends being hidden by the thick jungle, which hung down like a mat. A rum-looking log that were, boys! 'T was just the very longest size of python, to have an end at all, as can be matched in this creation. I were not so old a woodsman then, an' at first sight I did take the cretur' for a fine specimen of log-timber—I did so. His skin was all wrinkled an' hanging, like bark on a dying

trunk; an' the black an' gray scales, nigh as big as my palm, looked just as moss might on a rotten tree. We stood still staring at him, an' talking in whispers.

"Damme!" mutters the squatter, "he's five foot girt' if he's a hinch, an' hungry at that. Look at the baags of his skin: he'll not lie still much longer!"

"A forty-footer, I guess," says Harding, "an' that count would leave a fair margin for emergency in the matter o' tail."

"Now, what's the idee predominating in your indomitable soul?" whispers I to the squatter. "Shall we track off, or shall we waken this large-size reptile?"

"Guess this territory air mine, if it's hany one's," says he; "an' if sarpiants, which is a beast as don't eat beetles, comes on my ground, abinterfering with my cocoa-nuts an' my British liberty, which haas subsisted throughout etarnity, by the down-right singlar protection of Heving—I say I've a right to hexecute that sarpiant—or more so."

"I thought that old beetle-catcher was mad when first I see him, an' at that moment I knew it."

"How air you goin' to execute him?" I whispered.

"Wall," he said, "I'm the tallest an' strongest of this party, an' I shall take your boatman's parang,* give one chop at the cretur's body, an' run away as fast as my extr'ordinary agility will permit. Arter that," said he, "we'll come with the dogs, track the blood, an' shoot him."

"I didn't half like it, I tell you; but Harding chucked up like a charity-boy on washin'-day; an' says he, spitting on his hands: 'Shall I hold his tail for you, mister, while you make a chip?'"

"But the old squatter he turned to S'Ali, who was standing about twenty feet away, an' beckoned him up: 'Give me your parang,' whispers he, with his eyes fixed on the snake. But the nigger never stirred."

"Give me your parang, darn yer," muttered the squatter; but devil a bit did he move.

"We all turned. The Malay's face was green an' yellow in dull patches, an' the sweat stood out shini'g all over it; an' as we stood looking, his eyes suddenly began to roll, an' he drew the heavy parang slowly from the sheath; then the black of his eyes went up under the lids, an' flashed out again, quick as thought. He held the parang straight in front, shaking the end like a Dutchman handling a bowie. His lips parted, an' the foam, red-stained with pé nang, gathered about his ebony teeth. I thought the nigger was going into a fit, an' turned towards the squatter with my mouth open to speak; but his face was so gray an' set with fear, that I was stricken dumb. He clutched me with a trembling hand. "Come on, come away!" he whispered hoarsely. We knew no other peril, Harding an' I, but that big snake lying quiet at our feet; but the old man was so ghashly scared, that we turned without a word, an' followed him on the back-track. Once Harding trod on a dry stick, which snapped sharply in the silence—such a face the old man turned on us!

"About fifty yards away, I looked behind. S'Ali was standing with his back to us, slowly waving

the parang, an' seeming to pant and shake all over. Suddenly his feet moved, an' he began to dance backwards an' forwards, with arms outstretched, an' humming a low song. Thunder! it was about as funny a scene as one could wish to behold, if we'd only had a six-shooter or a rifle among us. But when the old squatter heard that song, he glanced behind, an' in an instant took to his heels. "Amok, amok!" was all the answer he'd give to our breathless questions, an' we needed no more to make us shew our "extr'ordinary agility." S'Ali was on the very point of running a muck, when we took alarm, an' left him.

"Yes, it was fear that drove him mad, if you can call an "amok" mad. He came back to the bungalow about two hours afterwards, an' asked me, as calm as could be, whether we had killed the snake after he left. I got rid of him quietly in Singapore; an' his next master had my very primest sympathy."

"Did you ever again meet an "amok"?" I asked.

"Yes, sir! I did so. And maybe I'll tell you that some day. It were a likely story, you may swear.—Kingman,* must we set a watch in this oll-fired location?"

TRADES' UNIONS AND THEIR REMEDY.

THERE is just a little gleam of light in the dark misty quarrels which disturb the relation between the employers and the employed. If the organisers of trades' unions had matters all their own way, there would be perpetual war between the two classes; but the industrial partnerships, now rendered possible, between the men of brains and capital and the men of muscle and industry, give a hope of better things.

Many of the arrangements established in France have been found useful for adoption in England, when modified to suit our insular circumstances. Workmen and others have been enabled to administer the affairs of manufacturing firms in a way which, until recently, the state of the law did not permit in England. The partnerships *en commandite*, established by the French, anticipated by many years our own industrial partnerships. They rest on the principle, that a man may have a pecuniary interest in a manufacture without being a skilled partner; that he may take his chance of high or low profits, without an entangling and embarrassing deed of partnership. A moneyed man who in England lends money to assist in carrying on a manufacturing or commercial firm, would, in France, advance it *en commandite*; he would not bargain for a definite rate of interest, but would allow his interest to depend on the profit of the concern. He may inspect the accounts, and may give his opinion, and that opinion may have weight; but he cannot act towards any third party as a partner, nor can his name appear in the concern, nor can he be held forth as a party implicated. He receives nothing at all unless the concern is profitable. Mr J. S. Mill, giving evidence on this subject a few years ago before a Committee of the House of Commons, said: "The amount of the sum advanced *en commandite* must be registered, and the number of persons from whom it comes; and the fact that the amount is registered enables persons dealing with that firm to be acquainted with its resources much more than with those of

* The heavy sword or wood-knife carried by Malay peoples. The shape of the blade differs considerably for different purposes, and in different tribes, but the handle is always at an obtuse angle curious to see.

* Mosquito Indians are generally called Kingmen.

any other firm whatever.' There is a regular line of distinction drawn between those who supply the money and those who carry on the concern; the liability is strictly defined on both sides; and the law makes provision for a due ascertainment and distribution of profits. Numerous very large concerns in France are carried on in this way—some of the *commanditaires* or contributaries living at long distances from the establishment, and having no other tie of connection with them.

The French have also, for more than half a century past, been successful in maintaining courts of arbitration or conciliation, the nature of which ought to be more generally known than it is in England.

The *Conseils de Prud'hommes* here adverted to present the following salient features. They have functions somewhat allied to those of English Chambers of Commerce, so far as concerns the protection of trade and commerce; but in possessing legal rights and privileges, and a power of administering justice within certain limits, they more nearly resemble chartered guilds or corporations. A 'prud'homme,' in France, is not simply what the name seems to imply, a 'prudent man,' but it denotes a respectable and experienced manufacturer or dealer, whose character is such as to inspire confidence in his actions and decisions. In other words, the idea of 'probity' seems more connected with the idea than that of 'prudence.' Be this as it may, the term prud'homme is applied in France to certain judges who exercise a jurisdiction somewhat of a paternal or family character. In the charters of many of the communes, this appellation is given to the municipal officers charged with the conservation of the common interests, men who are elected for that purpose by and from among the more experienced townsmen. Many generations ago, the city of Paris arranged for the election of twenty-four prud'hommes, to assist the mayor or maire in keeping order in the city, and, in particular, to act as inspectors of the markets and the public works; each prud'homme took charge of that department in which he had gained wisdom by experience—such, for instance, as the *Halle de Cuir*, or leather-market, which was presided over by one whose opinions and decisions were valuable in that particular trade. It was also customary for each guild or trade to choose one of their own prud'hommes to watch over and guard its interests.

It was by gradual steps of this kind that the *Conseils de Prud'hommes* derived their origin. One such body formed the 'Prud'hommes Pêcheurs' of Marseille, consisting of four persons elected by the fishermen from among their own number. They took oaths of office, and were thereupon sovereign judges on all matters pertaining to fishery police. Courts of trial, or 'audiences,' were held every Sunday. The complainant or plaintiff in any suit, before stating his case, had to deposit two sols in a box; as did likewise the defendant, before he could be heard in his defence. The prud'hommes, after having heard the explanations of both parties (without the aid of prosecutors or lawyers), immediately pronounced sentence, which was implicitly obeyed by both parties, under pain of forfeiture of the fishing-boat and nets belonging to the recusant.

After the First Napoleon became Consul, a *Conseil de Prud'hommes* was established at Lyon, consisting of nine members, of whom five were to

be dealers in silk goods, and four silk manufacturers. The *Conseil* was specially charged with supervision in regard to all matters relating to the silk manufacture, the staple industry of Lyon; but it embraced certain other trades within its operations, in relation to the petty differences which sprang up daily between masters and men, or between the workmen themselves. It was authorised to decide on all suits for less than sixty francs, without any particular form or expense of procedure, and without appeal; but the suit was not tried until conciliation had been attempted and had failed. No advocate or other lawyer was to be employed, except in the event of the illness or the unavoidable absence of the parties concerned. When Sir John Bowring inquired into the operation of this *Conseil*, many years ago, he stated that it was 'found of great value for the settling of questions between manufacturers as to the copyright in patterns and other disputes; between manufacturers and artisans, whether as regards wages, manner in which work had been done, or otherwise; and between masters and apprentices.' After many changes had been made in the organisation, the *Conseil* was made to consist of seventeen prud'hommes, nine nominated by masters, and eight by workmen—or rather, by such of the silk-weavers as had four looms each. The *Conseil* held its sittings in the evening, after the labours of the day were over; and had the power of settling all questions to the amount of one hundred francs—if for any greater sum, there was a right of appeal to the Tribunal of Commerce. The *Conseil* was invested with powers of summons, of seizure, and of imprisonment to the extent of three days. The members, or some of them, acted in the first instance as a Court of Conciliation, to examine the parties, suggest remedies for grievances, and prevent vexatious and expensive litigation. When conciliation failed, then adjudication was entered upon. At one time, the operative weavers who came within the powers of the *Conseil* were nearly eight hundred in number; of whom about five-sixths had four looms each, the remainder having from five to thirteen looms. But the number of weavers who were not admitted within the scope of the operations, on account of their having less than four looms each, was immensely preponderant; so that, after all, the system was comparatively limited in its application. The *Conseil* was divided into classes, each of which took cognizance of one particular branch of the silk manufacture—such as *étouffes de soie* (broad silks); *passementerie* (haberdashery and narrow silks); *bonneterie* (silk hosiery, &c.); and *chappellerie* (silk hats). One-third of the *Conseil* was renewed annually; and at each election, a president and vice-president were chosen by ballot.

All the principal manufacturing towns of France gradually acquired their *Conseils de Prud'hommes*, modified in their details of organisation according to the local and industrial characteristics of the town. In 1848, many alterations were made in the system, chiefly to give greater legal authority to the decisions of the *Conseils*. Disputes, of almost every kind, between masters, foremen, workmen, and apprentices, were brought within the scope of the system—with this exception, that a dispute between two masters could not be taken into account; there must always be a foreman, workman, or apprentice concerned. Further changes were made by a law or decree in 1853. By the year 1861, Paris had acquired many such *Conseils*,

each connected with a certain branch of trade. The statistics of one particular year, in one particular Conseil (that of the metal trades), speak well for the success of the system. Out of four thousand causes, suits, or complaints brought before the Conseil, conciliation was effected in two thousand five hundred without coming to the actual tribunal; five hundred were withdrawn; three hundred were submitted to special arbitration; and six hundred were adjudicated upon in a formal way; there were only seven appeals against the decisions, and in only three of these seven were the judgments of the Conseil overruled. In one of the Paris Conseils, the number of complaints heard, and decided on in some way or other, amounts to ten or twelve thousand a year.

It may very well be that these Conseils are not exactly adapted for imitation in England. The laws as to apprentices and journeymen are much more strict with the French than with us. For instance, when an apprentice has served his time, his master gives him a *congé-d'acquit*, or certificate of the fulfilment of his indentures; and the young man cannot be engaged as a journeyman unless he is in a position to produce this document. Then, as a journeyman or adult workman, he must have a *livret*, or certificate, inscribed with his name, trade, and description, the place whence he comes, and a testimony that he has fulfilled his engagements with employers: this becomes his passport from place to place, and his letter of recommendation to a new employer. This rigour and formality would prevent the simple adoption of a similar system in England, without modification. But there is no reason why we should deny ourselves the advantages of the French practice under modified forms. Already, as we shall presently explain, we have begun to imitate in a certain way the partnerships *en commandite* by our partnerships of industry; and the success of partial attempts at arbitration shews that we may possibly, by and by, avail ourselves of tribunals of conciliation bearing some resemblance to the French Conseils de Prud'hommes.

There have, we say, been many attempts made to establish some system of arbitration in trade disputes. These attempts have assumed different forms, according to the exigencies of particular trades. Some years ago, the bobbin-turners of Hulme, near Todmorden, settled a dispute with their employers by the intervention of a 'National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Industry.' The Association, despite its long name and ambitious aims, had the good sense to propose amicable concessions on both sides, which brought about peace. The boot and shoe makers of London had a formidable quarrel with their employers; just on the verge of resorting to a strike and a lock-out, they wisely brought together two committees, and ended with a treaty of pacification. The carpet-weavers of Yorkshire and Durham, after much fierce warfare, established a kind of carpet parliament, the masters being the lords, and the workmen the commoners. At an annual meeting to agree about prices and wages, the masters assembled in one room, and delegates from the several factories in another, each body presided over by a speaker or president. When either body arrived at a decision, the two presidents met, and each told his message. Whether these bodies increased or decreased afterwards, there were, at any rate, about twelve years ago, thirty firms and

two thousand workmen represented in this singular parliament. One of the carpet-manufacturers, who was president of the (lords') chamber at the time when the great strike in the cotton-trade took place at Preston, wrote a pamphlet to advise arbitration and conciliation in that deplorable dispute. He spoke most warmly of the good effects of the Yorkshire plan, remarking: 'For the last fifteen years, the delegates have only once retired with dissatisfaction, and upon that occasion, they prayed the masters to reconsider their verdict: the masters immediately held another meeting, and arranged the disputed point to the satisfaction of both parties.' This parliament succeeded even in averting several strikes in the carpet-trade in various parts of England.

The Staffordshire potters established a sort of board of arbitration, at the suggestion of the masters in the first instance. This board was to take cognizance of any new circumstances arising in the trade; in general, the wages for a particular kind of work were established for a year certain (the pottery-trade not being subject to such frequent fluctuations as many others); but when any new pattern or new article was introduced, the arbitration of the board was often useful between masters and men. The great preponderance of hand-labour over machine-labour, and the custom of engaging the operatives for long periods, render arbitration more easy here than in many other trades. The decision of the board had no legal binding effect; but the result was morally good, because all, or nearly all, the masters felt the arrangement to be a salutary one. It was a considerate item in the system that when a dispute arose, the workman was not thrown out of employment while the case was being considered, but continued his work, and was credited with the average rate of payment at that time, subject to any eventual addition or diminution. The board of arbitration was not a permanent one; it appears to have been chosen as occasion arose, the masters appointing three arbitrators, and workmen three, and those six choosing an umpire. The printers of London have some such an organisation prevailing among them; it was established ten or twelve years ago, and provided for an arbitration on disputed subjects, three members on one side, and three on the other, with the peculiarity of a *paid* barrister to act as chairman (with a casting vote) of all the courts that might be held. There are also a masters' committee and an operatives' committee, empowered to settle many minor disputes without bringing them before a court of arbitration. Concerning the tailoring fraternity, the introduction of women's work has so materially lessened the average rate of wages, that compacts formerly made could no longer be maintained; but some years ago, there was a remarkable organisation among the London tailors. When any dispute arose between masters and men, a trade society investigated it, and sent a deputation to the master: if he and they could not agree, a sort of general council of workmen was held, the matter was gone over a second time, and a second deputation appointed. This second hearing often brought about conciliation, when the first had failed. It was only under redoubled failure that the council ordered a 'strike' at that particular shop.

A Board of Arbitration, established about six years ago in connection with the hosiery trade at Nottingham, have just reported that the system has

worked very satisfactorily. Wages have varied with the state of trade; and the Trade's Union still exists; yet disputes have been settled and strikes avoided.

These instances of partial adoption of the arbitration system ought to be held in mind; they may have failed wholly or in part, but they contain within them the germ of good feeling between the wage-payers and wage-receivers.

Many experienced persons, however, now go further than this, and advocate something approaching to a partnership between masters and men. Until recently, this could not be done, because the state of the law interposed obstacles well-nigh insuperable. The possibility of dealing with matters of this kind has, however, at length been furnished by a recent act of parliament, an act passed so recently indeed, that no great advance can yet have been made in applying it practically. Formerly, if any person advanced money for carrying on a trade, and received a portion of the profits by way of interest, he incurred all the liabilities of partnership, and was responsible to the extent of every farthing he possessed for the debts of the firm. But now this is altered, and persons of small means can identify themselves with the prosperity of a particular undertaking without so formidable a responsibility. A contract in writing suffices to define the rate of profit divisible, without entailing any other consequences of an onerous character. A very interesting experiment has been made in this direction by Messrs Briggs, of Methley Colliery, near Leeds. After many months of very unpleasant dispute with the persons in their employ, marked by strikes and all their concomitant evils, the proprietors resolved to make a trial of the new partnership facilities. They made an agreement with most of the persons in their employ, to the following effect: That the men are to be identified with the works, and not with any trade-union; that they are to be paid wages at the current rate of the time and the district; that out of the profits or net proceeds of any one year, the proprietors are to receive ten per cent. as payment for interest on capital, expenses of management, risk, and other charges, which have to be borne by them alone; and that any surplus profit beyond the ten per cent. is to be shared in certain proportions between the proprietors and the workmen. The trade is not to be managed by a committee or board, as in the case of a joint-stock company; the original proprietors remain the real owners, as before, and conduct their operations in the way which they deem most advantageous to all concerned; but an impartial accountant tests the accuracy of the books, and declares the amount of profit divisible. Owners and workmen have alike a direct interest in the profitableness of the concern, and have therefore a sufficient incentive to do their best. After one year's operations, it was found that the ten per cent. had been fully paid on the capital, and that the workmen had received a bonus beyond their rate of wages. Both sides had done well, because both had acted well together. A railing and wire factory in the north of England, and an ironwork in South Wales, have also adopted the principle.

There appear to be two forms in which this kind of partnership can be introduced. The workmen may bring capital into the concern, or they may not. There may be shares of one pound or of five pounds, or of any other amount, to be taken up

by the men according to their means; or the men may bring only their skill and labour into the concern. The improved legislation on this subject allows either form to be adopted; but it is obvious that the articles of agreement must vary in the two cases. Where a manufacture is very simple, such as the digging and raising of coal, the accounts between the capitalists and the operatives may be adjusted with comparative ease; and so in an ironwork where only a small number of distinct articles are made, such as masses of pig-iron, railway bars, and wire; but when the operations combine many different processes, and lead to the production of many different kinds of articles, it may well be that these new partnerships would be difficult to organise.

Co-operative stores and workshops have often been described in this *Journal*; and we have only to wish them God-speed! If to these be added partnerships in which the workmen have a proprietary interest as well as the master, and courts of conciliation for settling by arbitration some of the disputes which arise in factories and workshops, we shall go far to remove the bitterness which now subsists, and to neutralise what is bad in trades' unions.

LORD ULSWATER.

CHAPTER XXIII.—IN CECIL STREET, STRAND.

THE man—late an ordinary seaman on board the Australian clipper-ship *Blackcap*, and whose further services Captain Bartletop had been so desirous to secure—and the beautiful young woman with the dark hair and flashing eyes, who had welcomed him so warmly to Cecil Street, stood side by side, and hand in hand, even now, when the first transport of mutual joy was passed, as if it was thus only that they could realise the glad truth of their reunion.

'Jem, husband, my brave, kind, patient Jem!'—so she said, holding fast to his arm, with her shapely head pillowed on his shoulder, and her dark eyes, not flashing now, but full of tears, gazing fondly up in his face; 'I love you better than ever, dear, and how I have longed and longed for a look and a word all through the weary, weary voyage over that great sea!' Impulsive in all things, she began to sob now, and the man stooped to soothe and caress her into a calmer mood, with wonderful gentleness for one so hardy and so bold.

'There, Loys, there,' he said, taking her hands, and drawing her to a seat; 'sit down, my dear. The voyage is over now, you know, darling; and, after all, we could see each other sometimes on board ship, and I could bear all so long as I knew my Loys was well and loved me.'

'Ah, but to meet before strangers, and as strangers, never alone, always with some one's eyes upon us, some one's ears ready to catch every word, had we been mad enough to risk discovery by speaking to one another. It was a torture, Jem—an ordeal like those they made poor wretches pass through in the old Saxon times, as I read when I was a girl.—But you don't know what I am talking of, dear fellow,' she said, with a sob and a laugh.

'Well, I don't exactly think I do,' answered the man, with great good-humour, patting his wife's little hand with his own broad bronzed one, as if it had been that of a child. 'I never was very bookish, was I?—But these are snug lodgings,

Loys, and you have managed cleverly, my girl, since you came ashore. It is not in a respectable, tidy, pay-your-rates-and-taxes sort of a crib like this that the blood-hounds would hunt for a gentleman come back from the lower side of the world without the Queen's leave.'

Indeed, the speaker was right. The room in which the husband and wife were standing was a decently furnished apartment, neat and dingy, being the first-floor sitting-room of a very orderly and quiet lodging-house. Given, the necessity for living in Cecil Street, Strand, at all, and there were not in that locality any apartments, to use her own favourite phrase, more desirable than those of Mrs Britton, the landlady. They were clean—as clean as could be expected in the carbon-laden atmosphere of mid-London; and their proprietrix, who, in her mittens and 'turned' gown of black silk, had an odd family-likeness to the hard, shining, black, horse-hair couches and chairs of her parlour furniture, was a good sort of woman enough, who had seen better days, of course, but who honestly owned to having seen them in the still-room of the country-house where she was lady's maid. The best and most expensive set of rooms was, of course, what Mrs Britton loved to call the drawing-room apartments; and these chambers of state had been secured by the dark-eyed young person who was addressed as Loys, but who had given her name as Mrs Fletcher.

The sitting-room was decidedly a neat one of its class; and its black sofa, with its hard and slippery bolsters—uneasy resting-place for aching heads; its six black chairs, one high-backed leathern throne such as dentists buy for the accommodation of their clients, and one beehive arm-chair in bronzed basket-work; its loo-table, work-table, and chiffonier of mock-mahogany; its dismal slip of looking-glass, meant apparently to chasten the vanity of those whose faces its sickly surface reflected; its grate, stuffed with cut white paper; its russet rug, and brown carpet; and even the prints of George IV., the late Lord Eldon, the Iron Duke, and Her Royal Highness the Princess Sophia of Gloster, which adorned its gray-papered walls, were good specimens of their kind. The lodgings were such as a married clergyman, not too plentifully provided with this world's goods, or a tenant-farmer of economical propensities, or the salesman of a Manchester house in the gray-goods line, might have chosen as his temporary abode during a fortnight's sober experience of the pleasures of the Great Babylon.

But it was a very unlikely resting-place to be selected by what landmen, and, still more, landwomen, insist, to the ruffling of the feelings of the persons principally concerned, in describing as a 'common sailor.' Something of this incongruity between the prim aspect of the lodgings and the picturesque grace of the handsome seafaring man at her side must have struck upon the young wife's mind: she looked uneasily around. 'Jem, I don't think Mrs Britton saw you, or the girl either; and I told the landlady that my husband was third-officer of a ship in the China-trade, dear; and if she saw you in those fore-castle clothes, she might suspect— Better change them at once, though it is a pity too,' she said softly.

As she spoke, she touched the man's arm, as if to arouse him from a reverie into which he had fallen. Such musing moods, indeed, were rare with him; but perhaps there was something in the sudden change

from the ship and the sea-life, with the Australian memories behind, to the midst of London, that occasioned him to be more thoughtful than was his habit. The house was quiet; quiet, too, was the street; and the low humming of a blue-bottle fly, that was vainly trying to get through a pane of glass, was very distinctly audible. But the window was partly open, and the roar of the Strand came hollow and hoarse, like the boom of the sea upon a stony beach, to strike upon the listener's ear. London, with all its stir and strife, and fret and toil, seemed to greet him with the mighty diapason of its millions of eager voices, and trampling feet, and rolling wheels.

The man started as his wife laid her hand upon his arm, and a sudden fierceness revealed itself in his sunburned face; but in a moment his eyes met hers, and he laughed good-naturedly. 'I was dreaming, lass,' he said, turning from the window; 'and I almost fancied, then, that the Philistines were upon me.—It comes back to me, now, that you said something about these salt-water clothes not being fit for a person of my respectability, and perhaps you are right, Loys.—Are all the traps brought ashore?'

'All. The luggage is up-stairs, every atom of it. Mrs Britton grumbled a bit; but I believe she was very much impressed by the sight of it.—Here are some of the things, as you see, and the rest are in the bedroom behind,' said Loys, throwing open the door of the room she spoke of, and pointing to a chest that stood in a corner: 'see, James, that contains the suit I want you to wear, just at first.'

The key was produced, the chest unlocked, and beneath a quantity of feminine wearing-apparel, there, sure enough, lay a complete suit of masculine habiliments, neatly wrapped in a large silk-handkerchief. The custom-house officers who came on board the *Blackcap* at Gravesend, had no doubt had a glimpse at this package, but it was not amenable to duty; and why should not a widow, if so disposed, preserve the holiday clothes of her late lamented lord, either as a refresher to memory, or with a prudential eye to future espousals? Yet it was a pity, as Loys repeated, when her husband went to change his attire, and she remained alone in the little oblong slip of sitting-room, looking out into the arid street, where a houseless dog was sniffing at the area railings, in the wild hope of being fed, and where a little Savoyard, with a marmot under his arm, sat on a door-step, and hungrily, with his white teeth, gnawed the stale crust that his padrone had given him for lunch and dinner combined—yes, it was a pity to put an end to that graceful masquerade, and to turn the gay young seaman into a prosaic denizen of the land. 'Happier for us both!' she murmured, 'if Jem could be a real fisherman or a real pilot, and we could live quietly, and eat honest bread! And— Ah, well!'

There were tears again in the woman's eyes. Her moods were strangely soft on that day, for those fine dark eyes of hers were more ready in general to sparkle or to glow than to weep. She dried them with an impatient gesture, and turned smiling to meet her husband, whose hand was already on the lock of the door.

Yes, it certainly was a pity. The lithe, dashing fore-castle Jack was gone, conjured away by the magic which a change of clothes can effect; and now there entered a dark-complexioned young

man, in an ill-fitting suit of glossy black broad-cloth, with a silver watch-guard crossing his waistcoat, and a black-silk neckcloth neatly and formally tied in a square old-fashioned bow and ends. Thus clad, with his rich light-brown hair sleekly combed out and brushed over his broad low forehead, the man looked not only less handsome but less honest, and several years older. We have all seen working-men who looked noble fellows in their working-clothes, but whose appearance in their Sunday apparel was by no means such as to attract admiring notice. The soldier, too, who in his scarlet bears himself so gallantly, a front-rank man, with his good-conduct stripes upon his arm, proud of the service, and respected by his officers—that brilliant military butterfly is often turned into a poor civilian chrysalis, when he wears unaccustomed mufti, and goes on furlough to visit at his uncle's farm.

'I am a horrid Guy; I know that very well,' said the man, coming forward, and casting a glance of disgust at his own image in the jaundiced mirror; 'but it was your choice, Loys, my girl. A red neck-tie, now, to light up this suit of dismals a bit, or a fancy waistcoat, perhaps.—Ah! you shake your head, lass. All right. It is safest to be dressed in this sort of way, I believe, especially for a fellow that Sir Richard has on his books by the nickname of Dandy Jen.'

'Hush!' Loys, looking round, with a finger on her red lips, from where she was on her knees beside an open trunk, made a playfully imperious sign to the incautious speaker to lower his voice.—'hush! We have our little secrets, James, haven't we? We don't want Mrs Britton, or anybody else, to guess what only we two know—that Mrs Walsh, the widow-passenger on board the *Blackcap*, homeward bound, was the same person as Mrs Fletcher, and that both names belonged to Loys Fleming, that was once' (here her brow darkened a very little, and her voice quivered, as if painful memories were called up by the name)—'Loys Sark that is now—or that my brave Jem and Dick Peters the sailor are one and the same.' Her colour heightened as she spoke, and she waved her hand towards him with a pretty gesture of fondness, that had something foreign in it, and then went on with her search in the box.

'But, Loys, the brave Jem is hungry—fit to eat a horse, I should say. We didn't have any regular dinner before the mast to-day,' remarked the man with a smile; and his wife left the room to hold high counsel with the landlady on the hitherto forgotten subject of the commissariat.

Fortunately, Mrs Britton was one of those landladies who do not much object to trouble when lodgers pay their way; and she had seen the yellow glitter of several sovereigns through the silken meshes of the purse which young Mrs Fletcher had, as if carelessly, exhibited in their first interview, when the request for a reference had been parried by the offer of a week's rent in advance. She therefore bestirred herself so satisfactorily that hot veal cutlets, a roast chicken, and a cold ham, with a dish of mealy potatoes, and one filled with an unknown vegetable substance, bluish in tint, and sodden in consistency, and which its provider æsthetically described as 'greens,' were duly set forth on the loo-table, flanked by a black bottle and a jug of frothing ale.

'Loys, my lass,' said James Sark, pushing his

plate aside at the conclusion of the repast, 'when are you going to see the child?'

'To-morrow,' Loys answered, with her dark eyes bent on the table-cloth—'to-morrow. And I think, James, that I had better see Mr Moss too. It will not be safe, I am afraid, for you to venture out much before we see how the land lies. Mr Moss can advise us, I am sure.'

CHAPTER XXIV.—LOYS GOES OUT.

Of all the stock in trade and properties, using the latter word strictly in its theatrical sense, which the enchanters of the middle ages were reputed to possess, perhaps the magic mirror was the most tempting. Such a wondrous glass, for instance, as that by the help of which Cornelius Agrippa shewed fair Geraldine to enamoured Surrey, or as that in which the sage Nostradamus gave Raymond, Count of Toulouse, a glimpse of the interior of his own princely household as it was when his sovereign back was turned. Our modern Magi, of the Polytechnic and elsewhere, are too honest, perhaps, to work such wonders; they take all the world into their confidence, and there is no use in a secret that has to be shared with the entire shilling-paying public.

But imagine an advertising optician who should be able to offer for sale a very limited number of magic mirrors, warranted to reproduce any desired scene with fidelity and dispatch—mirrors in which a man might see, imaged forth, the wife of his bosom, or his graceless heir, backing the red at Baden; or his highly respected banker making ducks and drakes of the securities in his hands; or the real state of affairs in his kitchen, cellar, and butler's pantry: mirrors that would reveal to the jealous wife why and how it was that her consort was so long detained at chambers or in the city; that would shew Sir Richard Mayne, sitting quietly in his room at Scotland Yard, the whereabouts of the decamping murderer; and that would give a statesman the inestimable privilege of peering over the shoulder of some distinguished foreign diplomatist as he pens the note on which hangs peace or war. What a price might such specula command, and how fiercely would the purchasers fight, tooth and nail, to be first at the counter, as the French stockbuyers fought to get Law's Mississippi shares, nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. To no one, possibly, would such a mirror have been more dearly welcome than to John Carnac, Lord Ulswater. Dangers were hemming him in, drawing near to him, gathering, as the clouds gather, when a storm is at hand. Some of these sources of peril he knew or divined, but there was one quarter and one alone from which the threatening hurricane that should make shipwreck of his life might be expected to blow. There was one person in the world whom he feared, if fear be not too strong a word to use with reference to that daring man—there was one person whom he had cause to fear; and it would have been of priceless benefit to him, could he, by aid of such a glass as has been spoken of, have seen what was going on in Cecil Street, Strand.

It was the forenoon of the day succeeding that on which the *Blackcap's* crew had been paid off in the port of London, and the young husband and wife who had come to England on board her, so near, and yet so utterly apart during all those many weeks of sea and sky, were together in the oblong slip of a horse-hair furnished sitting-room,

which Mrs Britton styled a drawing-room, and the maid spoke of as the one-pair front.

Loys had her bonnet on, and was prepared to go out; but James Sark was not to go, and it was precisely on this account that his wife lingered. Confinement to the house, to a man of his activity, was but one step removed from jail; and though it was probable that, should he stir abroad, some myrmidon of the law, in or out of the hateful police uniform, might tap him on the shoulder, it was evident that he was half inclined to run the risk. He moved restlessly to and fro like a caged animal, gazed out of the window, drummed upon the glass, and cast longing looks upwards at the blue sky and the fleecy clouds that the reek of London summer-smoke could not quite hide.

'Now, James, promise!'—she looked coaxingly in his face, as she drew from a trunk an armful of miscellaneous objects, and spread them carefully, almost reverently, upon the loo-table—'Jem, promise me!'

The man whom Captain Bartletope had prized so highly as a sailor, and who was beginning to feel less stiff and awkward in his funeral suit of black broad-cloth, looked quite piteously at his wife. 'I shall cut my throat, Loys, before you get back. Do think what a change it is, lass. Nothing to do, and that's about the very hardest work I know of. I'd give twenty pounds to hear the call of "Tumble up, all hands, to take in sail on her!" as when we were off the Horn, you remember. The frozen ropes cut a chap's hands to bits that night, but we got her under storm-sails, and made all snug, and that was better fun than being shut up here alone.'

'Now, dear,' said his wife, with that air of ineffably superior wisdom which sits so prettily on pretty women—'now, Jem, I've been thinking of that. Here'—and she opened a thick portfolio—'are your sketches; and I so want you to finish that of the cattle-station and the one of the native camp, before Australia fades out of your mind. Here are the colours, and here are the brushes, and the palette, and water in a glass. Here, too, are the diagrams, and the compasses, and the tiny little tool-chest, and the box with the models—and you know how anxious you were about the patent.—I shan't be long away, Jem, and you have plenty to do while I'm away.'

Yes, it was quite true. To very strange persons does Art reveal herself, and one of those to whom she had deigned to unveil was James Sark. The whole amount of tuition as a draughtsman which the man had had might well have been paid for, and perhaps was paid for, in nobblers at the bar of an Australian tavern, but he was a born artist.

To look upon those tasteful, delicate, well-executed sketches, some in pencil, others in water-colour, but all of much merit, good in design, and very patiently wrought out in detail, it would have seemed but half credible that they were the work of one at war with the society that he had wronged. Those sea-pieces, in which the sails and hulls stood so well against the background of lurid sky, or in which the opalescent hues of the sleeping tropic ocean were so faithfully rendered—those scenes of bush-life, where the plunging horses, the terrified cattle, the screaming eagle rushing overhead, the group of wild riders around the bivouac fire, were so truly and vividly drawn—whence did an outcast like this derive a love of nature so sincere and so strong?

On the table, near the sketches, lay a heap of diagrams, some very small tools fit for a gnome to labour with, and one or two unfinished working-models of machinery. That Sark had considerable mechanical skill could be more easily guessed than that he was capable of producing water-colour drawings of such taste. There was something in the sparkle and quick turn of his hazel eyes, something in the pliant power of his long supple thumbs, that indicated a deft handicraftsman. But he could invent as well as execute. The models were his own. The diagrams were due to his own thought and toil, and they were labour-saving and money-saving inventions—his—such as the world willingly rewards. Decidedly, it was a pity that James Sark should have been a thief.

A thief! a thief! It is an ugly, mean-sounding, stinging word, and he did not like it; but he was a thief by habit and by repute; and, what was worse, he was a transgressor against knowledge. He was not one of those who, like poor savage Bendigo Bill, had run to waste, veritable human wild oats, bitter to the taste. James Sark, reared in an honest home, removed from the pinch of poverty, and unspoiled by contact with temptation as a boy, had gone wrong out of sheer wilfulness. Then, once in the bad groove, he had been too proudly obstinate to come back to the right way, and presently the door—so it seemed to him—of mercy had been closed. He was a black-sheep, and society would have none of him.

He could probably have earned an honest livelihood in any one of half-a-dozen different ways, with about a fourth of the toil which his evil vocation imposed upon him. As it was, those adroit fingers, that could wield the camel-hair brush, or use the graver and file so dexterously, had been compelled to pick oakum, and make rope-mats. As it was, that sinewy right arm, that could haul home a topsail-sheet in a manner that won the good-will of Captain Bartletope, or ply a hammer and forge horse-shoes to the delight of colonial smiths, had spent much of its force in turning the dull unmeaning crank within prison-walls. In hiding, in escapes, in profitless plunder, the man's energies had been flung away, worse than uselessly.

It was not all his fault, he thought; but he was wrong. The world had been harsh to him, no doubt; but then it was not the world's business to make things smooth, and plain, and pleasant for a vagrant ne'er-do-well such as he. The shepherds saw in him but a tainted sheep drawing dangerously near to the sound flock, and they rose up to stone him. He had some good in him still—some tenderness, some faithfulness. Those who knew him best said that Dandy Jem had a soft spot in his heart, with all his fiery readiness to revenge an injury. He was true to the code of honour among thieves, sold no one's blood or liberty, never cheated a pal, never did a thing gratuitously cruel. Negative merits; but then the man was not a good man; he was among the lost.

He sat down now, more to please his wife than because he was inclined for the occupation, ground some colours upon the clean surface of the palette, dipped his brushes in water, and began to touch and alter his sketch of the native camp, an admirable piece of drawing, in which the mop-headed, scowling blacks, the women crouching under the gnyo, the dusky little heathen urchins

hurling their mimic spears, or begging for small coin at the stirrup of the bearded stock-rider that had reined up his horse, were lifelike in their distinctness. Meanwhile, Loys had adjusted the shawl upon her shoulders, and was drawing on her gloves.

'You'll promise me, then, Jem?' she said, when ready to go.

'I promise and vow—no; but it's all serene. I won't so much as peep out of the front-door till you come back, lass. Don't be long; and, hark ye, don't tell that Moss more than you must. He knows which side his bread is buttered, and won't split; but his chattering clerks might hear, you know.' Pledging herself to discretion, the wife left the room, and presently the sound of the closing street-door told that she had left the house. Sark sat still, with the paint-brush in his hand, adding here a dash of colour to the flaming Australian sunset, there a deeper shadow to the dark vista between the gum-trees. As he plied his brush, his thoughts were busy. Scenes far other than that which he was depicting rose before his mental vision, grew clear and distinct, and then died away, like the changeful hues of the chameleon.

He saw the white, low-roofed manse, with dark ivy creeping over all its western front, in a dingle fringed with feathery brushwood, high up in a mountain valley in the Isle of Man. That was the house in which he had been born; and that gray-headed, upright old man in threadbare black, leaning on a crutch-stick as he moved slowly among his beehives and his flowers, or read grim theological folios in the arbour above the stream, hearkening to the murmur of the bees, and the clack of the mill in the glen below, was his father. No minister was more respected, in or out of the pulpit, than he; but he was an austere man, singularly severe towards human frailty, and ill fitted to break in so random a colt as young James Sark had been to run meekly in harness.

He saw these things, and more. While his mother had lived, all had gone on with tolerable smoothness. She had stood between the boy and his good, stern father; and had screened him from many a reproof and many a punishment. She died. James Sark was wild then, but not wicked. His faults were those of unruly youth, nothing more. Truant, ringleader in mischief, idler—he was all of these things, but no thief. His father never understood him. In theory, the old minister was a domestic Draco. With him, no offence was venial. It really seemed as if the old man were of another species as compared with his son, who appeared to have quicksilver in his veins, and was always restless, noisy, petulantly busy with everything but his books.

He saw himself at sea, tossing about on the rough waves, and learning to know every rope in a ship, and every rock, shoal, and current around stormy Mona. There were two seafaring men, his mother's kinsmen, one of whom was a pilot; the other, a grizzled fisher, commodore, so-called, of the Manx fleet of herring-boats. These two were always willing to take the high-mettled lad on board, and teach him seamanship. He longed to be a sailor, while his father designed him for the ministry. Thence the jar of opposing wills—quarrels, reproaches, harshness, a miserable home. Presently, young James ran away, and went to sea

—a rebel. He shipped at low wages on board a Liverpool ship, bound for China; and for four years was knocked about in the far East, sailing in all manner of vessels, some of which were honest merchantmen, some smuggling craft, and one or two not much better than pirates. Then he had sunstroke, and was robbed of the few dollars he had saved, and was in hospital at Singapore, and coming out penniless, was sent home as a distressed British subject.

The prodigal was ashamed to go home and ask pardon. He wrote, but the letter remained unanswered. Ragged and desperate, he fell into evil company as he prowled hungrily about the seaport where he had been set ashore, and then came his first robbery—a share in the stealing of copper from a ship-builder's yard; and then a second and a third crime, followed by detection, trial, conviction. He left the prison—his had been a light sentence—with a wish to reform; but the good shunned him, his father had renounced him, he could never shew his face in Man again, and only the wicked welcomed him among them. Thenceforth, he went on steadily along the broad, black, downward road of ruin.

Jail chaplains were sorry for Sark, but ended by giving him up as a hopeless case—a brand that refused to be snatched from the burning. He had a sort of honour; he had very strong feelings. His cleverness was surprising; and his ability as a musician, an artist, and a mechanic, very remarkable. But his talents ran waste. In picking locks, in coining false money, in engraving plates for counterfeit notes, in prison-breaking, the man's adroitness spent itself, to the injury of himself and others. Then he met Loys Fleming or Fletcher, and married her—she well knowing him to be what he was; he aware that there was a black shadow of the Past resting upon her memory, although, when by chance he made her acquaintance, she was earning her living humbly and honestly by the fine needle-work and embroidery in which she excelled.

It was a marriage that promised well at first. Loys had sincerely wished her husband to be an honest man, and she was doing her best to wean him from wicked associates and perilous enterprises, when he was thrown into prison for his share in a bygone robbery, and presently convicted, and shipped to a penal settlement, where his wife rejoined him. He was back in England now, a runaway transport, liable to instant arrest, and summary punishment.

He was back in England, and not without a motive, deeper and more urgent than the wish to be free from police supervision. There was a secret known to him and to Loys, and to them alone, that would surely prove a mine of gold, a secret that was worth a great ransom, either way, and which, if disclosed, would carry with it the luxury of a great revenge. Of these things the man thought, as he plied his brush in the quiet lodgings in Cecil Street, Strand.

Meanwhile, dark-eyed Loys, demure and neat, almost to ascetic simplicity, in her demeanour and dress, made her way on foot, with a light swift tread, along the roaring thoroughfares eastward. The seething tide of London life rippled and chafed around her, but she went steadily on, without so much as one curious glance at the swarming foot-passengers on the gritty pavements, at the incessant procession of vehicles pouring along

the streets, at the shop-windows, every one of which, with its broad plate-glass front and tempting display of goods, outshone the united splendours of all the stores in a township of Western Australia. Her own thoughts, it might have been supposed, had any observer, to whom her antecedents were known, been present to note the expression of her compressed lips, and the lowering gloom of her dark eyes, dwelt more upon the vengeance which was in one scale of the balance than upon the profit in the other. Suddenly, her countenance cleared, as a cloud rolls away from a sunny sky, and there was a world of tenderness in her mellowed gaze, a world of tenderness in her voice, as she murmured: 'It is for him, dear lad, for him!—my poor Jem!'

By this time she was at the corner of the Old Jewry, and soon her nimble feet brought her to the well-known door, on the post of which was painted the name of Mr N. Moss, while the same name glimmered brazenly on the burnished door-plate. Tripping up the steps, she laid her gloved hand upon the bell-pull. As she did so, a person passing by, an old man, with grizzly whiskers, with a battered hat and frowzy greatcoat wrapped about him, an old man with a wonderful resemblance to a gray old rat, stopped and stared her in the face. 'You here, Missis!' he said with no apparent surprise.

'Why, Professor? why, Brum?' cried the young woman aghast.

'Ah! you thought old Brum t' other side the wall, Missis, did ye?' wheezed the old man. 'No, no.—But, my dear, if I were you, I'd not ring that bell; not if I knew it. A nod's as good as a wink, eh?'

And they stood, silent, face to face.

TAILORS.

TAILORS, to the archaeologist, present the same difficulties that beset the naturalist who penned the renowned chapter on the snakes of Iceland: of old there were no tailors. In the primeval and earliest of the historic ages, clothes were made and mended without professional assistance. Such simple garments as were worn were shaped and stitched by the deft fingers of women, as is the case among savages even now. The housewife of elder times, divider of bread, queen-bee of the hive, had fifty cares pressing on her mind from which her successor is free. Not only was the commissariat under her charge, larder, and cellar, and granary, the flitches in the wide chimney, and the clucking tenants of the hen-yard, but the clothing of husband, children, servants, all devolved on her. She and her handmaidens were never idle. Summer and winter, there were endless stores of flax and wool to be spun, and carded, and bleached in the dew and the moonbeams; there was reeling of yarn, and jealous measuring of web freshly sent back from the weaver's or the fuller's; and then the work of shears and needle for the common good.

A purely domestic process, in every climate and country, was the making of wearing apparel. The goatskin braccas of the Breton were as essentially home-made as the gaily checkered plaids in which the Scottish Highlander draped himself. A white Grecian tunic, a flowing eastern robe, the horsehide mantle of some grim, rawboned horseman pressing on towards the lands of wine and wheat

bread, were equally of home manufacture. The shepherd of Southern Greece, in his sheepskin jacket and dogskin cap, was as much indebted to wife or mother for the raiment he wore, as is a Red Indian to the squaw who has toiled for weeks to deck his moccasins with beads, and wampum, and porcupine quills, in the daintiest style of barbaric finery.

The great cities into which vast populations were gradually coaxed or coerced by their princes, were the true cradles of tailordom. What suited well with the simple life of the tent or the farm, did not suit with the bustling existence of the court, the forum, the temple, and the bazaar. In an Asiatic town it is that we find what is perhaps the most primitive type of the tailor. These oriental sartors are very gregarious; they live and work together, occupying whole streets, and falsifying, by their pacific demeanour, the old cynical proverb respecting the disagreement of two of a trade.

A curious sight does one of these tailors' quarters present on a fine summer's evening, while the golden light tells that there is yet a space of time before the muezzin's shrill call to prayers shall ring forth from the minaret hard by. There, at open windows, or on mats and benches thrust into the narrow street, the patient Moslems sit scowled at their work. Mustapha, with wiry moustache waxed to a point, his red cap set a little awry on his head, and with a dagger stuck into the shawl-girdle that enwraps his trim waist so tightly—a Turkish dandy in his way—is covering every seam of a gay Albanian jacket with gold lace. Turbaned Hassan, whom, by the green colour of his head-gear, we recognise as a holy Hadji, is at work on a pasha's coat, stiff, braided, superb, but a Giaour garment after all, copied from the coats of Infidel functionaries in Frangistan, and at which the old fanatic scowls darkly as he takes his long stitches. Poor white-browed old Selim, with a pair of horn spectacles on his venerable nose, bends over a pair of wide rose-coloured trousers of Persian silk, and strains his aged eyes to give the shulwars such a cut as may please the young aga, far off in Anatolia, to whom they are to be sent by the next camel-train.

There is, however, in the East but little work done for individual customers. Where clothes are not intended to fit, or are calculated to look equally well or ill on any one, lean or fat, personal caprice has scanty scope, and accordingly, most garments in Mohammedan countries are bought ready-made. This was once very much the case in Rome. The long gown of peaceful citizenship, the toga, worn by those engaged in active pursuits, were easily chosen out of a heap. It was not until the ornamented tunic had supplanted the plain garb of the old republican conquerors, that the tailor's art had fair-play in Rome.

It is not until the middle ages that we find the tailor play a really prominent part in social life. Then, indeed, we see him portrayed as a merry, astute, but rather slippery character, roaming the country in search of custom. He might be, and no doubt occasionally was, a grave merchant-tailor, paying scot and lot like any other burgess, belonging to a company, wearing its livery, and taking his turn to do military duty with the civic guard. But this is not the lively vagrant whom the old black-letter tales in verse and prose present to us. The true tailor of the feudal epoch had no shop; no stock in trade

beyond a few bobbins of thread, his needles, goose, and shears. His life was an errant one. He was sometimes living at free-quarters in some baronial hall or great farmhouse, where good cheer was plenty, and ale not stinted; and at less lucky perihelions of his destiny, he was glad to take refuge in a smoky hut, and to patch and darn old vestments, in return for a crust and a shelter.

Taken at its best, the tailor's life was rather adventurous than enviable. He lived from hand to mouth, earning little, and with small prospect of saving, since he was as often paid for his work by board and lodging as in the small silver of the period. He was obliged to drive incessant bargains as to the remuneration for his labour, and these bargains were none the less hard because they had often to be made with some knowing housewife—spouse of a yeoman, an esquire, or a citizen, as the case might be—but always wide awake to the great cardinal rule of feminine economy, that a penny saved is as good, or better, than a penny got. The bustling, shrill-voiced, untiring Dame Partlet of a matron, the managing, notable mistress of a house, is somewhat obsolete now; but in the middle ages, she flourished gloriously, and the tailor had a sharp eye upon him during his professional sojourn.

If he were not sorely slandered, the wandering tailor stood in much need of such a check. His light-fingered propensities were the subject of universal railing. True, he only stole in the way of his trade, but that made his appropriation of what other people had bought and paid for the more aggravating. We must remember that it was only on the best materials, at anyrate in the houses of the well-to-do, that the roving fashioner had to operate. Rough country cloth, frieze, linsey-woolsey, these were commonly made up at home into clothes good enough for everyday wear; but the fine cloth from Bruges or Florence, the Genoa velvet, the Venice silks, the costly webs of gold and silver, the furs of price sold by foreign traders from Lübeck—it was on these expensive stuffs that the craftsman had to exhibit his skill.

Our ancestors, just as they made up for months of spare living by one great gluttonous feast, were content to dress shabbily in general, emulating the peacock's splendours on holidays. The rich materials which they bought, now from a pedler, now at a fair, and again in one of their rare visits to a large city, bore an immoderate proportion to their annual income, but were meant to last, laid up in lavender, and locked in oaken presses, for the adornment of two or three generations. The journeyman tailor, to whom these gorgeous fabrics were intrusted, was naturally exposed to great temptations. Every cutting and remnant of the sound broad-cloth, the three-piled velvet, the crisp silk, had its money-value; to embezzle a portion was to secure something that could readily be turned into cash. Accordingly, after the bargain about pay had been struck, a second and fiercer debate ensued as to the quantity of stuff required. There was grudging measurement, sharp supervision, loud complaint. Then came into existence the familiar terms of cabbage and cribbage; while the craftsman's nickname of 'Snip' was due to his supposed tendency to cut the cloth too short—a peccadillo denounced in many a ballad.

Very likely, the tailor was often hardly used; it is probable that he was often the object of unjust suspicion, of all burdens the hardest to remove from the shoulders of any caste or class of men.

But, again, it is certain that a vagrant life is not conducive to a very strict morality, and the hedge-schoolmaster of Ireland, the gipsy, and the *Wanderjahr* journeyman of Germany, still to be met with on the tramp which a paternal government imposes on him, do not compare favourably with more stationary citizens. That the tailor of the middle ages was a merry vagabond, able to thrum the lute, to sing a good song, and to teach the dull dwellers in lonely granges the last court-game of cards, or tell them the newest jest and freshest scandal, we may well believe. His real or supposed rogueries were often condoned for the sake of the enlivenment which his visits afforded to the inhabitants of dreary districts, far from camp and capital.

The man-milliner, the 'woman's tailor' of Shakespeare, he who brought home Katharine's gown in the *Taming of the Shrew*, was a variety of the genus who would now appear strange to us. He survives, however, in the *Damenkleider* of the Fatherland. When Steele wrote, and even when Hogarth etched, the morning levee of a London fine lady would have been incomplete without the tailor. Perhaps the period of trunk-hose and ruffs, the Renaissance period, was the golden age of tailoring. Then, when a doublet had to be pinked, and slashed, and gored until the original stuff was almost hidden by the satin, and silk, and cloth of gold let into the fabric—when hose were bombasted and gallooned—and when thousands of seed-pearls were lavished on the embroidery of a single suit, the courtly fashioner realised great fame and high profits. The merchant-tailors predominated by this time, and customers looked to their tailor for materials as well as skill.

It must have been a melancholy Decline and Fall of the antique art when the severe simplicity and prosaic ugliness of modern modes supplanted the old school of dress. Yet it is but a little time, measured by years, since Ranelagh bloomed like a flower-garden with the gorgeous hues of masculine apparel. Many of us, who would take the imputation of old age in very ill part, have seen King George IV. corpulent and affable in blue, with fur collar and a star on his breast; yet George IV., when merely the wild prince, used to figure at state balls in a pink silk coat, with Poinis not far off in crimson velvet, and Falstaff swaggering near in peach-blossom and silver. Any tailor, a contemporary of the Duke of Wellington, for instance, would have seen bright colours and flashing laces give way to the invasion of the dull Black Sea of plain sober broad-cloth.

The art and mystery of tailoring has never been able to divest itself of certain comic associations. Whether to European imaginations, the cross-legged attitude of the *Schneider* seems as irresistibly ludicrous as to the physician it must appear injurious to health, is uncertain. It may possibly be the case that the use of the needle—long deemed a feminine prerogative—is the root of offence; but, at anyrate, no trade has been the butt of more arrows of sarcasm. A tailor's valour has been derided, a tailor's manliness impugned, and a tailor's horsemanship in especial has been a standard laughing-stock in the horsey world since the days of Billy Button and John Gilpin. We are, however, gradually learning to open our eyes to the injustice of these sweeping criticisms. Tailors, as a rule, form a smart and intelligent class, active, talkative, and with an especial addiction to politics. They are, as the metropolitan police can bear

witness, only too apt to quarrel and to settle their differences by fistic free fights upon a grand scale. Lastly, they furnish a fair proportion of members to the Volunteer corps, and it may safely be inferred that none of those citizen-soldiers would meet the foe with greater alacrity than the once despised tailor.

GURTHA.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER VI.

'WHEN do we start?' asked Gurtha of the maid, whom, when she went to her room for the night a day or two later, she found just finishing the packing of that very complete wardrobe of Mrs Garstone's providing.

The woman hesitated; she had been forbidden to say anything about the journey to Miss Trestrail. 'I know all about it, so you needn't tell me any lies,' was Gurtha's politely reassuring remark.

'We go as far as London to-morrow, I believe, miss, if Miss Wintower feels well enough, and the weather's better than it promises.'

Gurtha knew that the plan proposed was to leave her in Paris *en route*; the rest of the family, Miss Wintower with them, proceeding to Italy.

The room that had been given to Gurtha never would have been allotted to her had they had any idea of the desperate nature of the girl. One of its windows opened into a sort of outside corridor enclosed by glass, which ran along the greater part of one wing of the house to a glass-door, from which steps descended into a large conservatory; this was locked inside at night, and the key often left in the door.

When the servant was gone, and she had been alone some time, and the house was perfectly still, Gurtha locked and bolted her room-door; took off her evening dress, and put on the black one she had worn when she came to Chevala, and her hat and cloak. Noiselessly as she could, she opened the window into the corridor, stole along it, and looked through the glass-door down into the conservatory: a glimmering spark moved up and down among the flowers and shrubs. The place was dimly lighted from the drawing-room windows; and Gurtha, standing in the dark, could by and by distinguish Mr Garstone, moving slowly to and fro, enjoying a cigar, the perfume of the flowers, and his consciousness of happy love.

Gurtha had to wait. At last, however, her road was clear. She got out. She flew through the shrubberies, climbed the locked gate into the park, sped through the park, and climbed the palings into the wood. Then, at last, she paused to take breath, and to think of what she had done. Escaped, alone and at night, as from a prison, from a house where she had been treated as a welcome guest, as a daughter, as a sister. The wood frightened Gurtha. It was full of fantastic terrors, from wildly tossed boughs, grotesque trunks, unfamiliar noises, sudden and unexpected movements. She pushed through it, caught at by tangled undergrowth of prickly brier and twisted thorn, sometimes more than knee-deep in fern: it was a passage of fear. When she was on the open moor, and felt the full sweep of the wild wind, she felt safe and at home. Sometimes she ran, sometimes she walked, always making towards the sea; sometimes, for a few moments, she rested. The night was not dark; before the morning broke, she

had reached Michael's gate. She wrapped her cloak tightly round her, sat down on the ground, leaning against the friendly gate, to wait for morning—and fell asleep. When she woke, Michael was kneeling by her: he had jumped over the hedge, seeing as he came down the garden-path, in the gray of the morning, that something leaped against the gate. 'I've run away!' she cried, starting to her feet. 'How cold it is!'—yawning and shivering together.

He had risen when she did.

'I've been walking all night. I was hot when I sat down here. I suppose I fell asleep; but it's cold now. They've been very kind to me, but they were going to take me away to-morrow.—Be quick, Michael, and get the boat ready.' She had seemed stupefied on first waking, but now her energy returned. 'Be quick, Michael. They'll find I'm gone; they'll send over to the Grange; they'll come to look for you.—Be quick, Michael.'

But Michael stood still and stared at her. She noticed how ill he was looking, how altered, how strange.

'Michael, I do think you took me for my own ghost.'

'Miss Gurtha, do you know what it is you have done?' he asked solemnly.

'Why, of course I do. What do you mean? Don't lose any time. Get the boat ready directly, sir, I say.'

He said impressively: 'Miss Gurtha, you don't know what it is you are going to do.'

'I know what's the matter with you, at any rate,' she said: 'you are angry, Michael, because I didn't write as often as I had promised. You thought I had forgotten you. Dear Michael, it wasn't my fault.'

'I almost came to hope you *had* forgotten me, Miss Gurtha.'

'But I hadn't. I can't do without my dear old Michael.—Michael, please be quick—please get the boat now.'

'But, Miss Gurtha,' he said, 'I want to know this: do you clearly understand, that if you go away with me, as we had planned, you can never come back to be as you were before?'

'Do I want to come back?'

'But I mean, Miss Gurtha, people will say things against you, people will think things against you, the sort of things— Well, after this no gentleman will ask you to be his wife.' These last words he blurted out; he had meant to speak more plainly, but, at the last moment, his courage had failed him.

'Do I want any gentleman to ask me to be his wife?' she demanded.—'Michael, do, do get the boat ready.'

In the few moments that followed, Michael went through a great struggle. He stood motionless and irresolute, the girl all the while urging him on to be quick, to get ready, to lose no time; and the adversary took him unaware and at a disadvantage, after he had fought a hard fight, had come off conqueror, was weak with victory. In the time she had been away, he had come to himself, and had given up Gurtha. He had given up love and revenge, and the hope of ever seeing again the same 'Miss Gurtha' from whom he had parted, and he had said: 'It is best,' and was settling down to a gray dull life. 'It's very stormy,' he said, looking out to sea. 'I don't know that it's safe, Miss Gurtha.'

'I'm not afraid; I always feel safe with you.'
'At least come in and sit by the fire, and eat a bit, and have a drop of hot tea. Your teeth are chattering.'

'Well,' she said, 'if you'll be getting ready while I boil the water.'

He led the way in, blew up the fire, and set some water on in a saucepan, put his tea-canister and teapot and a cup and saucer ready for her. Then he paused a moment before he left her, in spite of her impatient face. 'Miss Gurtha, I've a heavy feeling about my heart,' he said—'a feeling that I'm doing you a mighty wrong in hearkening to you, and giving way to you. Will you ask God to forgive me?'

'You're doing me no wrong. What wrong can you be doing me? Do, do go and get ready, Michael. We can talk when we are in the boat.'

He went out of the house. Cowering over the fire, she cast curious glances round. The room was a sort of kitchen-parlour, neat and trim, flowering-plants in the window, books on the window-sill. Michael had not gone far; he did not seem able to tear himself away. He was looking stealthily at her through the window: he saw her stir the fire, lift the saucepan, make the tea. As he watched this done by her in his house, the old delirium overmastered him: his fears given to the winds, with his misgivings, his self-reproach, he rushed down to the Cove like a man possessed, and got the boat ready. 'At least, if I can't have her, no other man shall. We'll risk it together,' he said.

Quick as he was, Gurtha was down in the Cove before all was quite prepared. She was feverishly impatient.

'Are you warmer now, Miss Gurtha?' he asked her. He threw his best jacket round her, buttoned it at the throat, to keep it fast, and as he did so, fixed such a look of hungry love upon her as must have startled her had she met it; but she did not; she was looking out to sea.

He put bread and water, a flask of brandy, all the rugs and coats he possessed, into the boat, and then he gave Gurtha a few words of caution. The getting off, the getting clear of the surf, would be dangerous work. She must sit firm and quiet, do nothing but what he told her; once in the wide swell, and they were comparatively safe.

'I will do all you tell me, indeed I will, dear Michael,' she promised.

'One thing more,' he said. 'I tell you there's mortal danger, Miss Gurtha. In five minutes, the boat may be swamped, and as to swimming in that surf— In case anything should happen to either of us, would you mind just for once doing to me what you did when you was but a baby, and never since?'

'What's that, Michael?'

'Put your arms round me, Miss Gurtha, and kiss me of your own free-will. You wouldn't if I refused to take you, would you? But you will now?'

She paused a moment. She thought of Mr Garstone, and hesitated. She thought of Edith Wintower, and then, laughing recklessly: 'You foolish old Michael!' she cried; 'anything you like, only let us be quick—let us be quick;' and she threw her arms, as well as she could reach to do it, round his neck, and kissed him.

A few moments after that, they were tossing about on the surf. They were both drenched, and the boat was half-full of water almost immediately.

Gurtha, at Michael's command, baled out the water; and Michael, teeth set and brows knit, strained every nerve to keep the boat right.

'We're safe enough, now we're once off. They won't be getting up at Chevala for a couple of hours yet,' Gurtha said by and by, when they were in comparatively smooth water.

Michael answered nothing; and Gurtha, no longer having anything to do, no longer on the fret for fear of pursuit and capture, fell to thinking—of Chevala and its master—of what would be said, and done, and felt when she was missed. By and by, she got tired of thinking, tired of silence. As her excitement died away, fatigue made itself felt, and her spirits flagged.

The sea was turbid and stormy, very wicked and evil-looking under a lowering sky; it was all cold, cheerless, and gloomy, and the sea-birds shrieked dismally.

'I wish you would speak, Michael, it all looks so gloomy. You don't look like my Michael. I feel afraid of you. I'll jump overboard,' she said laughing.

'Be quiet, child; sit still. The weather looks bad, we shall have a squall down on us. I've work enough to manage the boat.'

Something in his manner silenced her. He spoke first next. She was shivering violently, and her teeth chattering. They had been out some hours. He bade her eat a bit of bread and take a sup of brandy, and she obeyed him. 'You wish yourself back in the gay rooms at Chevala?' he said.

'No, indeed, I don't, Michael; you needn't speak so crossly.'

By and by, she noticed that he seemed to be pulling for the island.

'What's that for?' she asked quickly.

He did not answer till he had pulled a good deal nearer.

'I can't beat about in the open sea till the steamer comes in sight. She'll be late to-day—wind and tide dead against her. I must rest a bit. I'm pretty near done for,' he said then.

'Poor Michael! Take something yourself. I'll hold the oars when we get into shelter; or I'll feed you now, if you like.'

'You hold the oars! Now I tell you what it is—it's my mind, not my body, that's tired, Miss Gurtha. It's been just one fight now for a good bit. Sometimes I've got so weak, I'd have lain down for my worst enemy to walk over me, and only asked for death.'

He was leaning on his oars now, not using them, letting the boat rock and roll in the waves that rushed on and rushed back from the island while he gazed into the girl's face.

'What is the matter, Michael?' she asked timidly.

'The time's come when we must understand each other, Miss Gurtha. This is the matter: I love you, Miss Gurtha, not like a boy, but like a man. You must promise to be all mine—my wife. You've done it, Miss Gurtha; you've tempted me beyond what a man can bear. It's too late now; there's no going back. I love you as no man loved a woman before. Oh, Miss Gurtha, I'll worship you always! But you must promise to be my wife—all mine, and only mine always, or we'll drown now together. Some way, I'll have you: no other man shall. I had fought with myself, and conquered myself over and over. At last, I'd done with you and all the best things of life, and then you came

back and tempted me, in your ignorance, your innocence, my beauty, but beyond what a man can bear. You'll have pity on me; you'll promise me now to be my wife?' He waited for her answer.

She shrank from him, pale and speechless, shrinking more and more as he bent more towards her. This was not her old friend Michael; this man, with a passionate face, and eyes at once fierce and imploring. This was a stranger of whom she felt afraid—afraid with such a fear as swallowed up her dread of her brother.

Again he urged his cause, and then again waited for her answer. It came.

'Take me back, Michael—dear Michael, take me back, and I will promise always to love you.'

'That won't do, my girl. I know what that means. And you will be another man's wife.'

'O Michael, I will promise never, never, never to marry anybody. I do not want ever to marry anybody,' she said. And as she thought of Mr Garstone and Edith Wintower, she burst into passionate crying, hiding her face in her lap. These tears rather hardened than softened Michael.

'You don't want to marry anybody, because you love a man you can't have,' he thought.

Presently she raised her head, and renewed her entreaties. When she found them of no use, when she looked into his face, and thought she saw it stern and relentless, her passionate spirit rose. She stood up, with difficulty balancing herself in the rocking and rolling boat. She cried imperiously: 'Take me back, fellow; I command you. I'm not afraid of death now; I don't care for life now. Take me back, or I'll drown myself.'

He was using every effort now to steady the boat.

'For God's sake, sit down, Miss Gurtha,' he said; 'I only ask you just to hear me.'

She sat down, and then his bitterness returned upon him. 'You're like many another bad-hearted fine lady, I find,' he sneered; 'and I thought you so different. Too proud to be an honest fellow's wife—the wife of a man who would love you and slave for you—too proud to be his wife, but not too proud to have made a plaything of him and a tool.'

'Michael, you are lying wickedly. You know it is not that!'

'What is it, then?'

'It is, that I do not love you—not in the way you want me to.'

'Because I am a poor fisherman, and not a gentleman. But just listen, Miss Gurtha. No gentleman will have you after this. Your character's gone after this. That villain, your brother, who drove you to it, will lead you a dog's-life after this.'

'What have I done, then, Michael?'

'Haven't you run away to me? Haven't you run away with me? Aren't we alone here together, with no one to hear or to help? Don't you remember what they said of the poor parson's daughter? Don't you remember what names they called her?'

'And will they say that of me? Will they call me such names? O Michael!' She hid her burning face in her hands. She was beginning to understand it all; and—she thought of Mr Garstone. Would he hear her called these names?

'I'd like to see the man who shall say a word against my wife!' he shouted, shouting against wind and wave. 'The poor parson's daughter went off with a villain, who never meant her anything but wrong. Now, I'll cut off my hand, Miss

Gurtha, before I'll hurt a hair of your head—only promise to be my wife.'

'What have I done? what have I done?' moaned the girl.

'What, I swear, you shall never have cause to repent. I'll work for you like a slave; I'll treat you like a queen. I'll pass for your servant, when you're ashamed to own me for your husband.'

She lifted up her face. 'Michael, you do not understand me. I'd never be ashamed of you—I couldn't be so mean. I should be nothing but proud of you—if I loved you; but I do not love you. Only as a playfellow, a friend, a brother; but when you talk to me of being your wife, I almost hate you,' she said slowly.

'Then you love somebody else?'

'Perhaps I do,' she answered. 'Some one else who only loves me as I love you.' And again she hid her burning face.

The boat had drifted nearer the island; it rocked violently in the waves that thundered against its rocky side. Michael made no effort to steady it; he was absorbedly watching the girl.

Gurtha presently again commanded Michael to take her back. 'You think I am in your power,' she cried; 'but I am not—I am not! I don't care for life, and I am not afraid of death, and I'm in nobody's power.'

He was relenting, but she did not know it.

Once more she sprang up—one foot on the side of the boat. She looked at him. Involuntarily, he stretched out an arm to hold her back, to save her, dropping his oar. She misunderstood the action. But whether the boat overturned with her, or she overset it in springing over, she could never afterwards distinctly remember. But they were both in the water, that she knew, for before she lost her senses, she felt herself seized and saved. He managed, somehow, by an effort almost superhuman, to land her on the rock. Then a mighty billow struck him, swept him from what he clung to, dashed him against the stones, and carried him senseless out to sea.

She lay senseless on the rock—safe for some hours, for the tide was falling.

THE MORNING MIST.

THE earth is covered with a hoary breath;

The white mist closes all the mountain view;

On changing leaf, on brake and rosy heath,

Still drops are freshening every splendid hue.

What magic colour on the moistened ground!

What stillness wraps the muffled hills beneath!

How lightsome reigns the living silence round;

Like expectation sweet while Love awakes from death.

Alas! 'tis Autumn's wing that broodeth there,

The farewell soothing with a golden show;

'Tis Autumn's weight that fills the burdened air,

Her tears that make the silver brooks o'erflow;

Her melancholy tinges every hill;

The lost allegiance of all flowers that blow,

The songs that other skies and valleys fill,

Shall leave a vacant home, a waste for Winter's snow.

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